Discussion on the Trinity of Civilian space and Nuclear Technology with USA

992. SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India and U.S. discussed the trinity of civilian space and nuclear technology on the 6th January, 2003;

(b) if so, whether facilitation of dual purpose hi-tech trade was also discussed;

(c) if so, whether North Korea and cross-border terrorism was also discussed; and

(d) if so, the outcome of the discussion with salient features thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) to (c) Yes.

(d) Discussions with Dr. Richard Haass, Director (Policy Planning) in the U.S. Department of State, on 6 January 2003 in Delhi were part of the process of regular consultations between India and the United States to strengthen bilateral cooperation and enhance mutual understanding on regional and international issues. The two sides have made progress on trinity issues, which includes a Statement of Principles governing bilateral high technology commerce, including trade in 'dual use' goods and technologies, signed on 5 February 2003 in Washington D.C. The United States acknowledges that cross-border terrorism continues and Pakistan must fulfil its commitment to end it. Government has also registered with the United States its deep concern at the reports of clandestine transfer of nuclear technology from Pakistan to North Korea.

Meeting of RPOs to streamline the Passport System

993. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether to streamline the passport system a meeting of the regional passport officers was held in New Delhi in the month of January, 2003;

(b) if so, the details of the discussions held and the outcome thereof;

(c) whether the existing loopholes/bottlenecks in issuance of passports would be checked thoroughly; and